

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 112070

70

ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

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R 091611 Z JUN 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

S E C R E T STATE 112070

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MASS, PINR, CB, US

SUBJ: MEMCON WITH RETIRED GENERAL WHITCOMB

1. ON JUNE 7 RETIRED ARMY GENERAL WHITCOMB CALLED ON DEPARTMENT OFFICER TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE MEANS OF FURTHER ASSISTING GKR. MEETING HAD BEEN SET UP AT REQUEST OF MILITARY LIAISON OFFICER TO CONGRESS FOLLOWING ABORTIVE EFFORTS OF GENERAL WHITCOMB TO CALL ON VARIOUS SENATORS.

2. GENERAL WHITCOMB STATED THAT HE HAD SERVED IN KOREA AND HAD BEEN RETIRED FOR 19 YEARS. SINCE HIS RETIREMENT HE HAS LIVED IN THE FAR EAST, MAINLY IN SAIGON, AND THAT HE HAS RECENTLY MADE VISITS TO PHNOM PENH AT THE REQUEST OF THE GKR. HE SHOWED A LETTER SIGNED BY MARSHAL LON NOL AUTHORIZING HIM TO DO WHAT HE COULD TO OBTAIN MORE ASSISTANCE FOR

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 112070

CAMBODIA. WHITCOMB STATED THAT HIS LAST VISIT TO PHNOM PENH ENDED ON MAY 23 FOLLOWING LONG TALKS WITH MARSHAL LON NOL DURING WHICH HE DISCUSSED WITH THE LATTER MEANS OF MAKING THE NEW HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL MORE EFFECTIVE AND WAYS OF BETTER USING KHMER TROOPS. HE BELIEVES THAT THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO BRING IN ADVISORS WHO CAN BOTH ADVISE AND INSTRUCT CAMBODIANS, INCLUDING MARSHAL LON NOL, ON THE PROPER FUNCTIONING OF THE GKR AND THE WAR.

3. WHITCOMB'S IDEA (HE IS MARRIED TO A KOREAN AND SERVED IN KOREA IN THE PAST) IS THAT THE USG SHOULD AWARD A LARGE CONTRACT TO THE ROK UNDER WHICH THE LATTER WOULD SEND MILITARY ADVISORS TO CAMBODIA. HE ALSO DECLARED THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY UNNAMED KHMER OFFICERS THAT THEY WOULD SHORTLY SEND A SPECIAL EMISSARY OR GROUP TO WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS SUCH A PROGRAM. MEANWHILE, THEY WOULD SEND WORD OF THIS PROPOSAL AND THE PROPOSED MISSION TO WASHINGTON, NOT THROUGH THE US EMBASSY, BUT VIA A SPECIAL AMERICAN CHANNEL WHO IS ALLEGEDLY LOCATED IN BANGKOK.

4. WHITCOMB ALSO STATED HIS BELIEF THAT THE APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL MAXWELL TAYLOR AS U. S. AMBASSADOR WOULD BE WISE SINCE HE HAS THE STATURE AND EXPERIENCE TO IMPRESS AND ADVISE MARSHAL LON NOL.

5. IN REPLY, DEPARTMENT OFFICER STATED THAT MANY OF THE THINGS THAT GENERAL WHITCOMB HAD SAID TO MARSHAL LON NOL SEEMED TO BE VERY MUCH IN LINE WITH DISCUSSIONS ALREADY HELD BETWEEN THE MARSHAL AND AMBASSADOR SWANK. WITH RESPECT TO HIS IDEA OF USING SOUTH KOREANS UNDER A US CONTRACT, IT WAS EXPLAINED THAT THIS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE UNDER PRESENT LAW. WHITCOMB WAS GIVEN NO REPEAT NO HOPE THAT PRESENT REGULATIONS COULD BE CHANGED AT THIS TIME GIVEN CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE CAMBODIAN CONFLICT AND INDOCHINA AS A WHOLE. HIS IDEAS ON AMBASSADORIAL CHANGES WERE NOT PURSUED.

6. FROM MILITARY LIAISON OFFICER MENTIONED ABOVE, IT WAS ALSO ASCERTAINED THAT MRS. WHITCOMB ALLEGEDLY WORKS FOR OR WITH A " HOUSE OF HOPE FOUNDATION" IN PHNOM PENH, WHERE SHE VISITS FAIRLY FREQUENTLY. SHE IS CONNECTED WITH
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SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 112070

" HOUSE OF HOPE FOUNDATION" IN KOREA.

7. EMBASSY SEOUL'S A-157 OF MAY 14, 1973 AND ENCLOSURES SENT TO DEPARTMENT AND SAIGON CONTAIN CONSIDERABLE INFORMATION ABOUT GENERAL WHITCOMB AND FAMILY. COPIES WILL BE SENT TO PHNOM PENH AND BANGKOK. FROM THIS AIRGRAM'S CONTENTS IT APPEARS, AS SEOUL'S 0735 PUT IT, THAT

" REPUTATION OF RICHARD S. WHITCOMB IS NOT SATISFACTORY AND
WE RECOMMEND AGAINST ANY TRANSACTIONS WITH ANY
FIRM IN WHICH HE HAS SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST." WE WOULD
NOTE THAT THERE IS NO CRIMINAL RECORD INVOLVED. RUSH

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